Will new Tinker Board take bite out of Raspberry Pi?

January 25 2017, by Nancy Owano

(Tech Xplore)—A 4K-capable Tinker Board from Asus could be a real-

deal signal that Raspberry Pi has competition.

This is the Asus answer to the DIY world for a single-board computer that can take on the Raspberry Pi3.

Harry Fairhead in *IProgrammer* commented that "Now we appear to have a major player entering the arena with a product that is clearly intended as a direct competitor at the top end of the Raspberry Pi range."

Reports say the price is £55 price and that it is available in the UK and Europe.

Fairhead said it became commercially available at a price of £55 on the cpc.farnell.com website. That site carries a product description so here is what customers can expect. "The Tinker Board features a fast on-board processor to increase its operational speed. It also features Wi-Fi and Bluetooth capabilities to enhance the functionality to allow connection to a variety of wireless networks."

Tinker Board is the short term. The full name is the Asus 90MB0QY1-M0EAY0 Tinker Board. *Ars Technica UK* said this is a 32-bit A17 CPU, ARM Mali-T764 GPU, 2GB of RAM, and gigabit Ethernet. The quad-core Arm Cortex A17 CPU is running at 1.8GHz.

Mark Walton, Consumer Editor at *Ars Technica UK*, provided a number of details about its features and some of those that he named included 4K video playback and 24-bit audio support; and swappable antennas for the built-in 802.11 b/g/n Wi-Fi module.

So is the Asus newbie almost like having a Raspberry Pi? Tech watchers called up a number of similarities and a number of departures. The scores on the benchmark test could be a selling point.

Fairhead said that it "shares the general layout of the Raspberry Pi but comes with double the memory and a more powerful CPU, making it almost twice as fast on benchmark tests."

That benchmark test point was also mentioned in *Ars Technica UK*. "Asus claims it pulls in almost double the benchmark score in Geekbench, which should equate to better 3-D performance," said Walton.

As for similarities, Walton said, "Both single-board computers are almost exactly the same size, and at first glance it appears that the GPIO pins and mounting holes are in the same positions, suggesting the Tinker Board wants to be a drop-in replacement for the Raspberry Pi."

Then comes the question of audience appeal.

Walton said, "A large part of the appeal of the Raspberry Pi is its software support and community, which is expected to grow further following the release of the PIXEL Linux desktop for x86 PCs. Asus, on the other hand, will be starting its community from scratch."

Fairhead remarked that "What will make a difference is how hard Asus works to support the Tinker and provide all the information needed to make use of it."

As for target users, this is where the Tinker Board is in the same race. Targets, said *IProgrammer*, were the same as top of the range Pis. The education sector, including electronics and coding, was one. Others were makers and those involved in IoT/industrial applications.

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